

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Demonstration to Maintain Independence and Employment

Background

Section 204 of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 directed the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to establish a grant program that authorizes States to provide Medicaid benefits and services to workers who have physical or mental impairments that, without medical assistance, will result in disability.

The goal of the Demonstration to Maintain Independence and Employment is to address the needs of those people who have specific physical or mental impairments that have the potential to lead to disability. This demonstration authority will allow States to assist working individuals by providing the necessary benefits and services required for people to manage the progression of their conditions and remain employed. The demonstration projects will be used to evaluate the impact of the provision of Medicaid benefits and services as related to extended productivity and increased quality of life.

Target Population

Louisiana will be targeting working adults with serious mental illness (SMI). Louisiana understands that this population faces significant challenges to uninterrupted employment, and that the long-term nature of serious mental illness and relapse potential contribute to uneven job tenure and reliance on subsidized non-competitive jobs, Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Relapse, including psychiatric hospitalization and the inability to work, is associated with limited access to community-based treatment and poor medication compliance, including lack of access to medication and community support.

Program Design

Louisiana's Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) Demonstration to Maintain Independence and Employment will: 1) provide access to the full array of Medicaid-like services for Demonstration eligible participants with SMI residing in Louisiana; 2) assess the effectiveness of standard Medicaid services on job retention compared to a control group; and 3) evaluate the feasibility of wider implementation of these models.

The Demonstration will study whether the provision of Medicaid services contribute to: 1) job tenure; 2) increased earnings; 3) independence from Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI); and 4) improved health status and quality of life.

The Demonstration will use an experimental evaluation design to measure the impact of early assessment and the effects of providing standard Medicaid-like services, and no services. The outcomes measured will include job retention, earnings, reliance on SSI and SSDI, health status, and quality of life. Six hundred participants will be randomly assigned to a treatment group and a Control Group.

Timeline

Recruitment efforts for DMIE participants are expected to begin upon approval of project protocols. We anticipate that participant enrollment/service provision for the Louisiana DMIE project will begin January of 2006 and continue through September 2009.